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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 823

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING SEVERE MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill makes an employee eligible for workers' compensation benefits if:

1. the employee's employment caused the employee to witness the death or maiming, or immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of at least one person;
2. the death or maiming was caused by an intentional act of another person, and not a natural cause; and
3. a licensed and board certified mental health professional diagnoses the employee with a mental or emotional impairment and determines that the impairment originated from the employee witnessing the death or maiming, or its immediate aftermath.

Except for special circumstances related to police officers and firefighters, current law does not provide workers' compensation benefits for mental or emotional impairments unless they stem from a work-related physical injury or occupational disease.

The bill also extends all workers' compensation benefits to (1) police officers who suffer a mental or emotional impairment caused by using, or being subjected to, deadly force in the line of the duty and (2) firefighters diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder caused by witnessing the death of another firefighter in the line of duty. Current law limits the benefits in these instances to treatment by a psychologist or psychiatrist approved by the Workers' Compensation Commission.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 7 Nay 4 (02/28/2013)